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Chapter 6

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CHURCHES AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

This is taken from the 1926 Blue Book and was written by Andrew Price.

It runs in my family to try to wipe out the bitterness of the Civil War. In 1873, William T. Price, now 43 years old, was pastor of a church in Virginia. He had been a minister in the Presbyterian Church for 15 years and had been Chaplain of Pickett's Brigade during the war. In 1873 he was sent as a delegate from the Presbytery to the General Assembly at Little Rock, Arkansas, and there he made a motion looking forward to the union of the northern and southern branches of the church and he came nigh to being lynched. His resolutions did not receive a single vote. The old gray wolves of the Assembly turned to rend him. He never got over it and to the day of his death would never discuss it. I think he was glad to escape with his life.

There was a great man in the Methodist church who intimated in a merry jest that such division left the one organization just a little south of God and the other a little north of God.

The Rev. Richard ^{McIlwain} D.D. in his book "Memories of Three Score Years and Ten" has a good deal to say about the incident at Little Rock. Published in 19⁰⁸. "The thing that stirred the Assembly, for a time, more than any thing else is not a matter of record: but it held its breathless attention."

Dr. William Brown of Richmond spoke kindly of our friend but expressed bewilderment that he should have ventured on such an escapade without consultation with an older and more experienced churchman. The good book says: In the multitude of counselors is safety, and it does seem a pity that in a matter of public import, and at a day so beset with obstructions, a man of excellent sense, high character and unexcelled devotion, should not have been prudent enough to consult with brethern before launching himself on such deep waters. For my part, however, I glory in the spunk of a man who thinks for himself, has the courage of his convictions, and on all proper occasions is ready to express them anywhere, every where. While he felt a sudden abashment for the suddenness of his taking off, he had the consolation of having done what he thought right. In a long life, too, he has maintained his integrity as a christian thinker and worker and is exerting his strength in behalf of the churches of the world."

At a critical time in his (Mr. Price) career he put his foot in it by making a motion without having been prudent enough to consult with brethern having more experience in such matters. The Lord spared him to the age of ninety, sixty-three years of which time he was an ordained minister.

In 1885, William T. Price and his family moved from Mount Clinton, Virginia back to the old Price homestead in Pocshontas county. It was a hundred miles. They had three covered wagons to come for the household goods. The farher, mother and three children came round by rail to Covington where a spring wagon met them for the fifty mile deive to Marlins Bottom. The three oldest boys were entrusted with the family horse and

rockaway and sent over the mountains by the most direct road. At Dayton we got a small organ that was tied on behind the carriage. This load required all passengers to walk up hill. We were five days on the road and at night stopped with Presbyterians along the road. My father had preached all through the mountains for many years and was now going out of the land of Egypt to make his last stand in these mountains. He had married late, and had grown old with a family of small children on his hands, and was now on his retreat.

The following is from the Pocahontas Times and was written by Calvin W. Price.

My own father, the late Dr. William T. Price, was a man of unusual talent, great learning and high culture. Through his long career as a minister, he constantly refused calls to the big churches up north. He found joy in his plainly seen duty of serving and building congregations which needed him more than he needed them. Others have builded on sure foundations he laid. He lived to see fields he had opened occupied by a dozen ministers. Once he was asked if his sixty years of labor for others had been worth the while. The reply came promptly, if there was nothing to his credit other than touching the life of one certain country boy and influencing him to enter the Gospel ministry, his life was perfected in the work of that one man. Naturally, we all know of many, many lives he had touched and influenced for the better things. Too, often he had seen the country robbed of talented ministers by great city churches, to the great hurt of the cause. He would never lend himself to such robbery of the

poor; he dwelt among his own people.

* The southern Episcopal churches had to change their prayer books to show allegiance to the Confederate states of America, but the churches in the north continued to class them as belonging to their church and during the four years of the war, in their conclaves marked the southern representatives as unavoidably absent, so the church was in a measure automatically restored at the end of the war on the same plan that Lincoln had worked out for the civil government of the seceding states.

* From- 1926 Blue Book